



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

P (303) 866-3441

F (303) 866-4474

John Hickenlooper, Governor

Robert Randall, DNR Executive
Director

James Eklund, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Taryn Finnessey, Sr. Climate Change Specialist
Kevin Houck, P.E., Chief, Watershed & Flood Protection Section

DATE: March 9, 2017

AGENDA ITEM: Agenda Item #25 Spring Climate Outlook

Background:

As of March 7th, 37% of the state is classified in drought conditions ranging from moderate (35%) to severe (2%), while an additional 15% is classified as abnormally dry according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Nearly all classification are on the eastern plains with Lincoln county experiencing the most severe conditions. Dry conditions and high winds have resulted in some grass fires on the plains in recent weeks. Snowpack is at 134% of normal for the state, with all basins well above normal for this time of year. The San Miguel/Dolores/ Animas/ San Juan currently has the highest snowpack at 148% of normal, the Gunnison, Upper Colorado, Upper Rio Grande, and Arkansas range from 130% to 145% of normal and the South Platte, North Platte, and Yampa/ White are slightly lower at 126, 122 and 119% of normal respectively. Statewide reservoir storage remains strong at 107% of average.

Staff will present the latest information on both drought and flood conditions and outlooks for the coming weeks and months. Information on snowpack, reservoir levels, stream flows, potential response actions, and related topics will be presented. A review of last year's runoff season will be provided. Staff will also present a long-term forecast for the region and discuss possible impacts from the current weather patterns.

A joint meeting of the Water Availability Task Force and the Flood Task Force will be held on March 21, 2017. Daily flood threat bulletins will be available on the CWCB website during the Colorado flood season from May through September.

Staff Recommendation: This is an informational item only. No Board action is required.

